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Tracking Offenders, 1987

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Twelve States provided data describing the processing and disposition during 1987 of felony arrests arising from 621,625 incidents. Of the more than 536,000 persons arrested in the 7 States that reported on the whole process beginning at arrest, 81% were prosecuted, 60% were convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, and 40% received a sentence to a State prison or a local jail. These findings are from data voluntarily submitted to the Offender Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) program of the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

OBTS collects data from States on the criminal justice processing of persons arrested for a felony. In 1987 the participating States, which accounted for more than a third of the resident population of the United States, were Alabama, Alaska, California, Delaware, Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Virginia.

Other findings from an analysis of these felony arrests include the following:

- Of the 520,925 prosecutions, almost 1 in 4 resulted in a court dismissal, and slightly less than 3 in 4 ended in conviction. One percent of the prosecutions resulted in acquittal, and 3% resulted in other nonconvictional dispositions.

- More than 6 in 10 of those convicted received a sentence to a State prison or local jail. Among those convicted of homicide, 92% were sentenced to incarceration; among those convicted of rape, 94%; among those convicted of unspecified types of sexual assault, 87%; of robbery, 68%; and of burglary, 85%.

The Offender-Based Transaction Statistics program gives researchers and planners a vantage point from which they can not only view the entire criminal justice process from felony arrest to sentencing, but also track the movement of individuals through all or part of that process.

This report presents the highlights of data from the 12 States that voluntarily participated in 1987. These statistics provide benchmarks against which States may wish to compare themselves in terms of both the likelihood of conviction and the types of sentences imposed.

We thank the participating States for their invaluable cooperation. As more States strengthen the OBTS program, the data, which will soon span a decade, will provide more detailed information, promoting an even greater understanding of the criminal justice system.

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Director

- Most persons arrested for all types of felonies were male (86%), white (61%), and under age 30 (64%). Whites and blacks comprised about an equal percentage of accused violent offenders.

- The median time between arrest for a felony and a decision by a court was 3.5 months. About 90% of all felony arrests were processed by the criminal justice system within 1 year.

Introduction to OBTS

This report is based upon OBTS data received from 12 States and covers felony arrest cases that terminated in calendar year 1987. State criminal records repositories sent reports for persons arrested for one or more felonies with a final disposition in 1987. Each report had a readable fingerprint identification. The offenses may actually have occurred in earlier years; 66% of the 621,625 incidents disposed of in 1987 occurred in that year, 28% occurred in 1986, and 5% occurred prior to 1986.

An OBTS record distinguishes among arrestees, incidents, and charges. The arrestee is identified through fingerprints and is assigned an identification number which can be linked to earlier records. The incident number identifies each incident so that records in multiple-charge cases can be condensed. In the latter situation, the program collects the most serious arrest charge as well as the most serious disposition by the police, prosecutor, grand jury, or court, depending on the circumstances of the particular case. Sentence information is also collected for the conviction on the most serious charge.

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Felony arrest dispositions

Data from Alaska, California, Delaware, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania indicate that for every 100 persons arrested for a felony, 81 were prosecuted, 60 were convicted, 40 received sentences to incarceration, and 10 were committed to a State prison usually for more than a year (table 1).* The other five States (Alabama, Georgia, Nebraska, Vermont, and Virginia) provide data that begin after the decision has been made to prosecute.

Compared to persons arrested for violent, property, or drug felonies in the seven States, those arrested for public-order offenses (such as weapons violations, bribery, or obstruction of justice) had the highest percentages of being subsequently prosecuted and convicted. Eighty-four percent of persons arrested for public-order felonies were prosecuted, and 69% were convicted of some offense, though not necessarily a felony or a public-order offense. Compared to persons arrested for other types of felonies, a smaller percentage of those arrested for public-order felonies received a prison sentence, 4%, or a sentence to either jail or prison, 31%.

For those arrested for property felonies, prosecution rates (83%) and conviction rates (64%) were higher than among violent or drug felony arrestees. However, sentences to prison (9%) were less likely among property arrestees than among drug arrestees (11%) or those arrested for violent crimes (13%). Those charged with drug felonies at arrest were the most likely of all persons arrested for felonies to receive a sentence to incarceration in jail or prison (46%).

For the 18 specific types of crimes examined, persons charged with homicide were the most likely to be prosecuted (91%). Other persons arrested for a felony with a high likelihood of prosecution included those charged with larceny (89%), burglary (88%), and arson (87%). Between a fourth and a fifth of the arrests for violent crimes such as rape or robbery were likely to result in confinement in a State prison, but the likelihood of prison in the case of homicide was 1 in every 2 arrests (table 1).

*At least four States, Alaska, Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania, do not report persons arrested for felonies and released by the police.

Table 1. Disposition of felony arrests in 7 States, 1987

Arrest offense	Number of persons arrested*	Percent of persons arrested who were: Prosecuted	Convicted	Incarcerated Total	Prison
All offenses	536,014	81%	60%	40%	10%
Violent offenses	138,011	79%	51%	34%	13%
Homicide	5,851	91	69	61	50
Kidnaping	3,089	72	49	38	17
Sexual assault					
Rape	5,219	74	48	39	23
Other	2,465	86	66	46	19
Type unspecified	3,650	80	58	43	21
Robbery	40,943	83	54	43	22
Assault	66,455	77	47	26	5
Other violent	10,339	73	48	25	2
Property offenses	190,133	83%	64%	44%	9%
Burglary	66,379	88	72	56	15
Larceny/theft	47,911	89	66	40	6
Motor vehicle theft	20,838	83	48	38	6
Arson	2,215	87	63	41	14
Fraud	24,853	86	65	37	6
Stolen property	20,132	74	55	36	5
Other property	7,805	76	51	24	4
Drug offenses	126,894	79%	57%	46%	11%
Public-order offenses	80,976	84%	69%	31%	4%
Weapons	19,641	81	57	29	7
Other public-order	61,335	85	73	32	3

Note: The 7 States are Alaska, California, Delaware, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania. The other 5 States provide OBTS data only after the decision has been made to prosecute.
*Includes only arrest reports containing readable fingerprints and excludes 128 incidents for which the NCIC codes are not known. Alaska, Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania do not report the number of persons who may have been released by the police.

Adjudication

The OBTS program captures information on the most serious charge and the most serious consequence for the arrestee at each decision point in the justice process. A basic program requirement is that the arrestee must have been originally charged with a felony, an offense that may be punishable by imprisonment for more than 1 year. However, OBTS data reveal that about a quarter of the felony charges at arrest were downgraded to misdemeanors by prosecutors or the courts.

Table 2. Likelihood of being prosecuted after arrest for a felony in 7 States, 1987

Arrest offense, in rank order	Percent of arrested persons who were prosecuted
Homicide	91%
Larceny/theft	89
Burglary	88
Arson	87
Sexual assault, other	86
Fraud	86
Public-order, other	85
Robbery	83
Weapons	81
Sexual assault, type unspecified	80
Drug	79
Assault	77
Property, other	76
Stolen property	74
Rape	74
Violent, other	73
Kidnaping	72
Motor vehicle theft	63

Note: Prosecutions were not necessarily pursued for the arrest offense or for a felony.

Of the 621,625 felony arrests, 377,675, or 61%, resulted in conviction, an attrition rate of 39%. In the seven States reporting pre-adjudication dispositions, the police released 4% of the persons arrested for felonies, grand juries or prosecutors failed to indict 13%, and prosecutors filed *nolle prosequi* on 1%. (*Nolle prosequi* is notice to the court that the prosecutor will not pursue the case — in some jurisdictions following approval by the court.) Of the total number of persons prosecuted, the courts dismissed 24% of the cases, acquitted the defendant in 1%, and rendered a judgment other than acquittal or conviction in 3% (table 3).

The percentage of cases resulting in convictions varied by type of offense. For example, 81% of the persons charged in court with a public-order felony and 63% of the persons charged with a violent felony — a difference of 18 percentage points — were subsequently convicted. For court dismissals, however, the difference was in the opposite direction: courts dismissed cases of 32% of persons prosecuted for violent crimes and 16% of those prosecuted for public-order crimes.

Persons prosecuted could ultimately be convicted of an offense less serious than the arrest offense. This charge-reduction may have occurred from plea bargaining or because the evidence or testimony supported only a lesser charge. Conviction, in OBTS, refers to any conviction following a decision to prosecute. Persons prosecuted after being arrested for public-order crimes that exclude weapons offenses had the highest conviction rates, 84% of those

The more serious the crime charged, the longer it will take to dispose of the case.

OBTS permits an examination of the relationship between the gravity of offenses and the amount of time required to process cases from arrest to conviction. In the 1987 data, courts in the 12 States disposed of 480,730 arrests (the same person may have been arrested more than once) for which the offense levels were known — 363,892 felonies and 116,838 misdemeanors.

In general, courts processed 1% of all cases immediately following arrest and 90% within the first year (figure 1). It took less than 3.5 months to process half the cases from an arrest to a decision by a court.

During the first 2 months, 41% of the misdemeanors, as opposed to 31% of the felonies, received final dispositions. Within 6 months of arrest, courts had disposed of 73% of the misdemeanor cases and 68% of the felony cases. The cumulative distribution of cases processed indicates that in each month up to a year after arrest, courts had processed a higher percentage of misdemeanor cases than felony cases.

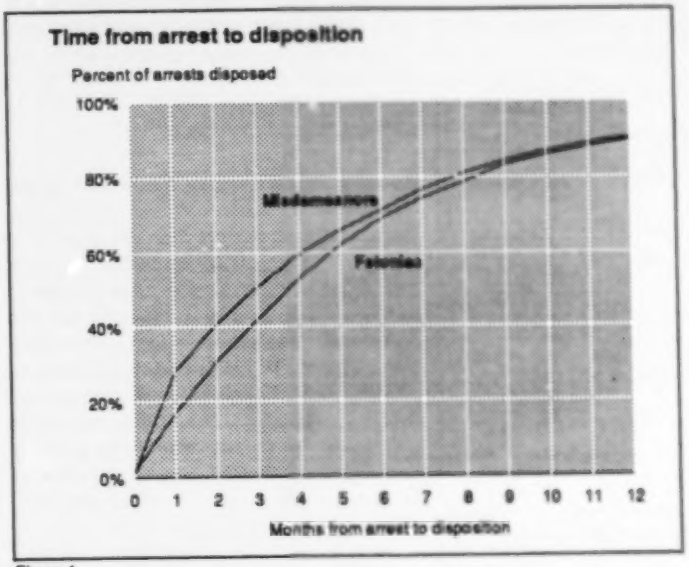

Figure 1

Table 3. Disposition of cases prosecuted in 12 States, 1987

Arrest offense	Number of persons prosecuted*	Percent of cases prosecuted resulting in: Total	Dismissal	Acquittal	Other non-conviction	Conviction
All offenses	520,925	100%	24%	1%	3%	73%
Violent offenses	122,395	100%	32%	3%	2%	63%
Homicide	6,523	100	17	6	2	75
Kidnaping	3,000	100	29	3	5	62
Sexual assault						
Rape	3,874	100	31	4	1	64
Other	2,439	100	20	3	2	75
Type unspecified	4,770	100	20	4	7	69
Robbery	36,495	100	31	2	1	65
Assault	57,663	100	36	2	2	60
Other violent	7,631	100	33	1	0	65
Property offenses	204,985	100%	21%	1%	4%	75%
Burglary	66,750	100	16	1	2	81
Larceny/theft	59,404	100	21	1	4	74
Motor vehicle theft	15,234	100	21	1	4	74
Arson	2,359	100	22	3	4	71
Fraud	36,865	100	23	0	5	71
Stolen property	17,059	100	24	1	3	73
Other property	7,314	100	30	1	4	65
Drug offenses	113,281	100%	26%	1%	2%	72%
Public-order offenses	80,264	100%	16%	1%	2%	81%
Weapons	17,558	100	24	2	4	70

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
*Includes 8,055 cases of *nolle prosequi*.

prosecuted (table 4). In addition, those charged at arrest with burglary (an 81% conviction rate), homicide (75% conviction rate), or sexual assault excluding rape (75% conviction rate) reflected the highest percentages of conviction among those prosecuted.

Table 4. Likelihood of being convicted if prosecuted after arrest for a felony in 12 States, 1987

Arrest offense, in rank order	Percent of persons prosecuted who were convicted
Public-order, other	84%
Burglary	81
Homicide	75
Sexual assault, other	75
Motor vehicle theft	74
Larceny/theft	74
Stolen property	73
Drug	72
Fraud	71
Arson	71
Weapons	70
Sexual assault, type unspecified	69
Robbery	65
Property, other	65
Violent, other	65
Rape	64
Kidnaping	62
Assault	60

Note: Persons were not necessarily convicted for the arrest offense or for a felony.

Dismissals, acquittals, and other nonconvictions among those prosecuted were highest for those charged with violent offenses — 37% of those prosecuted following arrest for a violent crime had their cases terminated by other than a conviction (table 3). Assault, with 40% of the cases ending by other than a conviction, kidnaping (38% nonconviction rate), and rape (36%) had the highest percentages of prosecuted cases which resulted in other than a conviction.

Sentencing

As noted for convictions, sentences reflect the specific conviction offense, which may have been less serious than the arrest charge. For the OBTS data obtained from the 12 States in 1987, 65% of those convicted were sentenced to prison or jail, and 35% received probation or other types of sentence without incarceration (table 5). Among persons arrested for a violent or property felony and convicted, there were two sentences to incarceration for every sentence to probation, fine, restitution, or community service.

Persons arrested for the most serious violent crimes and convicted had the highest percentage of convicted offenders receiving a sentence to confinement. Eighty-nine percent of those arrested for homicide and convicted received a sentence to incarceration. Those arrested for unspecified sexual assault, rape, or robbery and convicted received a confinement sentence in 80% of the cases. About 3 out of 4 persons arrested for a drug felony and convicted received a sentence to incarceration.

Fifty-six percent of offenders arrested for a public-order felony and convicted received a sentence that did not include confinement in prison or jail. When all sentences are considered together for offenders convicted in the 12 States in 1987, at least half of the persons arrested for motor vehicle theft, a drug offense burglary, or stolen property were sentenced to local jails (table 6).

Table 6. Likelihood of being sentenced to jail if convicted after arrest for a felony in 12 States, 1987

Arrest offense, in rank order	Percent of convicted persons who were sentenced to jail
Motor vehicle theft	62%
Drug	56
Burglary	53
Stolen property	52
Violent, other	49
Assault	44
Larceny/theft	43
Arson	42
Sexual assault, other	41
Weapons	38
Kidnaping	37
Fraud	36
Robbery	36
Property, other	34
Public-order, other	34
Sexual assault, type unspecified	33
Rape	32
Homicide	16

Note: Sentences given were not necessarily for the arrest offense or for a felony.

Table 5. Sentences received in 12 States, by arrest offense, 1987

Arrest offense	Number of persons convicted*	Percent of those convicted who were sentenced to: Nonincarceration			Incarceration		
		Total	Probation**	Other	Total	Prison	Jail
All offenses	376,658	35%	21%	14%	65%	20%	45%
Violent offenses	76,987	32%	18%	14%	68%	29%	39%
Homicide	4,980	11	8	3	89	72	16
Kidnaping	1,838	23	17	7	77	39	37
Sexual assault							
Rape	2,523	20	13	6	80	48	32
Other	1,807	29	20	9	71	30	41
Type unspecified	3,240	20	16	5	80	47	33
Robbery	23,770	20	12	8	80	44	36
Assault	34,000	44	23	2	56	12	44
Other violent	4,919	46	26	20	54	5	49
Property offenses	153,732	34%	20%	14%	66%	19%	47%
Burglary	53,632	22	15	8	78	25	53
Larceny/theft	43,729	41	24	17	59	16	43
Motor vehicle theft	11,254	22	15	7	78	16	62
Arson	1,657	32	23	9	68	26	42
Fraud	26,252	47	25	22	53	17	36
Stolen property	12,405	36	23	13	64	12	52
Other property	4,803	54	21	33	46	11	34
Drug offenses	81,427	23%	14%	8%	77%	22%	56%
Public-order offenses	64,512	56%	37%	19%	44%	9%	35%
Weapons	12,208	49	34	15	51	13	38
Other public-order	52,304	58	38	20	42	8	34

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. Sentences given were not necessarily for the arrest offense or for a felony.
*Number of convictions for which sentencing data were available.
**Includes 18,850 dispositions of probation without a verdict.

Following conviction, more than 7 of 10 persons arrested for homicide and almost 5 of 10 arrested for rape were sentenced to State prisons (table 7).

A reduction in offense seriousness from arrest to conviction, as cases passed through the justice process, can be observed in the decreasing percentages in all offense categories except public-order. As shown below, among those arrested for a felony and convicted of some offense, public-order offenses such as gambling, regulatory violations, and obstruction of justice accounted for 17% of those convicted, based on the arrest charge, but nearly 25% of those convicted, based on the court-disposed conviction offense.

Type of offense	Arrest offense*	Conviction offense*
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Violent	20.4	16.1
Property	40.8	38.5
Drug	21.6	20.5
Public-order	17.1	24.9

*The arrest offense was a felony; the offense at the time of disposition may have been a felony or misdemeanor.

Sentencing patterns observed for convicted offenders based on the court-disposed conviction offense were similar to those based on the arrest offense (table 8). The more serious violent crimes, such as homicide and rape, reflected the highest percentages of prison commitments, while less serious public-order offenses resulted in higher percentages of convicted offenders receiving a nonincarceration sentence.

The three major sentencing options of probation, jail, and prison reveal substantial differences in the composition of those sentenced (table 9). For example, while robbers accounted for 5% of those convicted and about 2% of those sentenced to either probation or a local jail, they comprised 13% of offenders sentenced to prison. Violent offenders were about twice as prevalent among those sentenced to prison as among those given either probation or jail terms.

Table 7. Likelihood of being sentenced to prison if convicted after arrest for a felony in 12 States, 1987

Arrest offense, in rank order	Percent of convicted persons who were sentenced to prison
Homicide	72%
Rape	48
Robbery	44
Kidnaping	39
Sexual assault, other	30
Arson	26
Burglary	25
Drug	22
Sexual assault, type unspecified	22
Fraud	17
Motor vehicle theft	16
Larceny/theft	16
Weapons	13
Stolen property	12
Assault	12
Property, other	11
Public-order, other	8
Violent, other	5

Note: Sentences given were not necessarily for the arrest offense.

Table 8. Sentences received in 12 States, by conviction offense, 1987

Conviction offense	Number of persons convicted	Percent of those convicted who were sentenced to: Nonincarceration Total	Nonincarceration Probation	Nonincarceration Other	Incarceration Total	Incarceration Prison	Incarceration Jail
All offenses	373,142	34%	21%	13%	66%	20%	45%
Violent offenses	60,173	28%	19%	9%	72%	34%	38%
Homicide	3,793	8	5	2	92	81	11
Kidnaping	766	19	15	4	81	58	22
Sexual assault							
Rape	1,000	6	5	1	94	81	13
Other	2,172	26	23	3	74	28	46
Type unspecified	2,763	13	10	3	87	56	31
Robbery	15,096	12	11	1	88	65	23
Assault	26,691	34	26	8	66	15	51
Other violent	7,892	55	18	37	45	3	42
Property offenses	143,754	31%	21%	10%	69%	21%	48%
Burglary	32,142	15	12	3	85	40	45
Larceny/theft	51,644	34	23	11	66	15	52
Motor vehicle theft	10,234	22	15	7	78	17	61
Arson	1,225	23	19	4	77	35	43
Fraud	25,070	46	26	19	54	18	36
Stolen property	15,867	32	25	7	68	15	53
Other property	7,572	44	24	20	56	7	49
Drug offenses	76,411	20%	14%	7%	80%	23%	57%
Public-order offenses	92,804	55%	30%	25%	45%	8%	37%
Weapons	14,013	42	33	9	58	14	43
Other public-order	78,791	58	30	28	42	6	36

Note: Conviction offense is that offense disposed by the court upon conviction. Sentencing data were available for 99% of convictions. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Table 9. Convicted offenders sentenced to probation, jail, or prison in 12 States, by conviction offense, 1987

Conviction offense	Percent of convicted offenders Total*	Probation	Jail	Prison
All offenses	100%	100%	100%	100%
Violent	17%	14%	14%	27%
Homicide	1	--	--	4
Kidnaping	--	--	--	1
Sexual assault**	2	1	1	4
Robbery	5	2	2	13
Assault	8	9	8	5
Other	2	2	2	--
Property	40%	37%	41%	40%
Burglary	10	5	9	17
Larceny/theft	14	15	16	10
Motor vehicle theft	3	2	4	2
Arson	--	--	--	1
Fraud	6	8	5	6
Stolen property	5	5	5	3
Other	2	2	2	1
Drug	22%	13%	25%	23%
Public-order	21%	35%	20%	9%
Weapons	4	6	4	3
Other	18	29	17	7
Number	324,418	79,676	169,558	75,184

Note: Conviction offense is that offense disposed by the court upon conviction. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
--Less than 0.5%.
*Excludes convicted offenders sentenced to other than probation, jail, or prison.
**Includes rape.

Demographic characteristics

The majority of persons arrested for a felony in the 12 States were male, white, and under 30 years of age (table 10).

Although men predominated among persons arrested for all the categories of felonies, their percentages were especially high among persons arrested for violent and public-order offenses (89%). Higher percentages of women were found among arrests for larceny (24%) and fraud (35%).

Sixty-one percent of persons arrested for a felony were white, 39% were black, and about 1% were Native Americans, Asians, or Pacific Islanders. This overall pattern also existed for drug and property offenders, but blacks were more highly represented among those arrested for violent offenses (48% of arrestees), while whites accounted for a larger percentage of public-order arrestees (75%).

Persons in their twenties accounted for 49% of those arrested for violent offenses, 51% of property arrestees, 54% of those arrested for drug violations, and 46% of those arrested for public-order felonies. These young adults were most overrepresented among those arrested and charged with robbery, kidnaping, and motor vehicle theft. By contrast, arrestees at least 40 years old at the time of their arrest were overrepresented among those arrested for homicides, assaults, arson, fraud, all types of sexual assault, and public-order offenses other than weapons violations. Across the major offense categories, an overall decline in arrests was associated with increases in age, and regardless of category, persons in their twenties accounted for the largest percentage of arrests (figure 2).

Appendix

Felons and felonies

Data from 11 States that provided ID numbers for both arrestees and arrest events show that courts in these States disposed of 582,649 arrest events attributable to 404,534 arrestees, or 1.44 felony arrest events per offender.*

*A person may have been arrested multiple times over different years, but a court disposed of these separate arrests in the same year.

Table 10. Sex, race, and age of persons arrested for a felony in 12 States, by arrest offense, 1987

Arrest offense	Percent of persons arrested for a felony										
		Sex		Race			Age				
	Total	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-39	40 or older
All offenses	100%	86%	14%	61%	39%	1%	14%	27%	23%	25%	10%
Violent offenses	100%	89%	10%	50%	48%	1%	14%	27%	22%	25%	12%
Homicide	100	90	10	53	47	1	15	27	21	23	14
Kidnaping	100	92	8	54	46	1	9	28	25	27	10
Sexual assault											
Rape	100	99	1	54	46	--	11	26	24	26	13
Other	100	99	1	77	21	2	13	18	16	28	25
Type unspecified	100	98	2	66	34	1	10	21	19	29	21
Robbery	100	92	8	36	64	--	23	32	23	19	4
Assault	100	87	13	54	45	1	11	25	23	26	15
Other violent	100	86	14	74	25	1	7	21	23	32	17
Property offenses	100%	82%	18%	61%	37%	1%	16%	28%	23%	25%	8%
Burglary	100	90	10	64	35	1	22	30	21	21	5
Larceny/theft	100	76	24	56	43	--	17	25	21	26	11
Motor vehicle theft	100	91	9	60	39	1	23	33	20	18	5
Arson	100	84	16	65	34	1	15	23	19	27	16
Fraud	100	65	35	66	33	1	9	25	23	29	13
Stolen property	100	80	12	66	33	1	20	29	20	22	9
Other property	100	93	7	68	31	1	24	28	21	21	7
Drug offenses	100%	85%	15%	61%	39%	--	11%	29%	25%	26%	8%
Public-order offenses	100%	89%	11%	75%	25%	1%	8%	23%	23%	28%	18%
Weapons	100	95	5	59	41	1	16	29	22	23	11
Other public-order	100	87	13	80	19	1	6	21	23	29	21

Note: The sex, race, and age of persons arrested for felonies were reported in 93%, 91%, and 98% of the cases, respectively. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

--Less than 0.5%.

Methodology

Local criminal justice agencies record arrest data and other information on fingerprint cards and disposition documents. The agencies forward the data to a State's criminal information repository that updates appropriate master records. OBTS receives data from the repositories. OBTS coverage may remain incomplete within the reporting States for several reasons. Not all law enforcement agencies fingerprint all persons arrested, and some do not submit all their fingerprint cards. Offenders sometimes surrender directly to a court and are not fingerprinted. Even when a fingerprint card is filed, the prosecutor or court may not report the final disposition.

BJS annually solicits State repositories to extract and submit data from the master records, following OBTS guidelines. Some States are in the process of automating their criminal-history files and cannot participate. Other States do not participate because of insufficient reporting by local agencies, criminal-history files not designed for statistical extraction, or lack of resources.

To ensure comparability among States, the OBTS standards use the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) offense codes. To ensure privacy, an OBTS record uses as personal identifiers only an encrypted identification number (to permit study of repeat offenders), sex, race, and age.

OBTS data are based on the year of final disposition, not on the year of arrest. Thus, an OBTS year includes arrests that occurred in an earlier year. A final disposition refers to either a decision not to prosecute or a trial court finding, not to an appeal.

Access to data

OBTS data are publicly available for the disposition years 1980 through 1987. Data for 1988 are being processed and should be available in late 1990. Researchers interested in analyzing the OBTS data may access them through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) at the University of Michigan. Information can be obtained from NACJD/ICPSR, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; telephone (800) 999-0960.

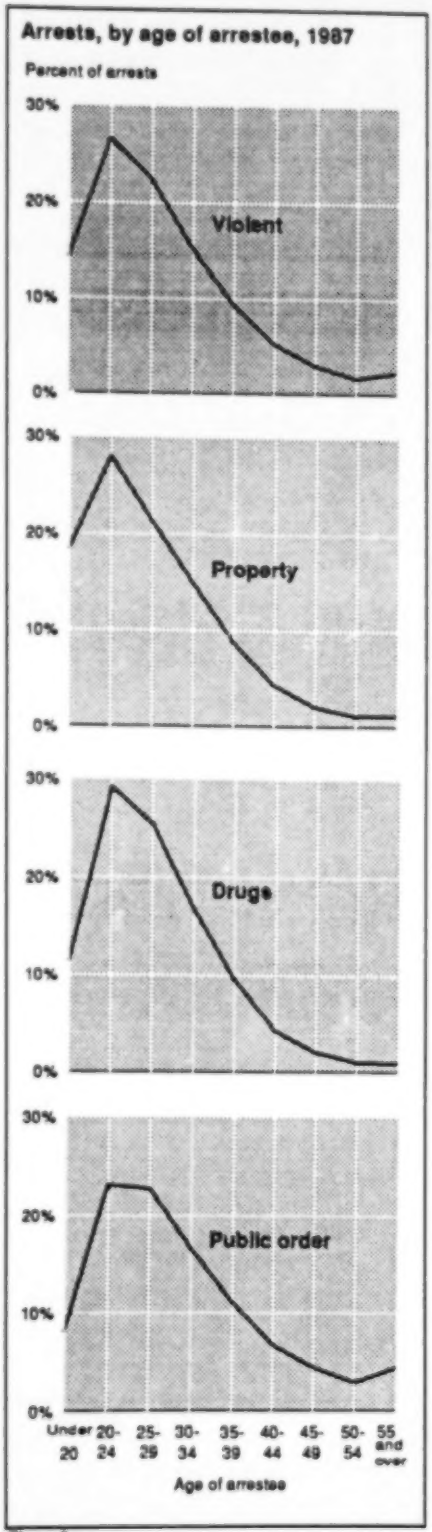

Figure 2

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletins are prepared principally by BJS staff. Jacob Perez wrote this Bulletin. Brian Reaves provided statistical assistance. Thomas Hester edited this Bulletin, and Marianne Zawitz provided technical assistance. Marilyn Marbrook administered production, assisted by Yvonne Boston and Jayne Pugh.

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